



DVD

DISC DETAILS
RELEASED: Out now
RRP: £15.99
DISCS: 1
ASPECT RATIO:
2.35:1
AUDIO: DD 2.0
EXTRAS: None
PICTURE: ★★★★★
AUDIO: ★★★

FILM DETAILS
DISTRIBUTOR:
Unanimous Pictures
CERT: 15
RUN TIME: 109 mins
YEAR: 2007
DIRECTOR:
David Auburn
STARS: Sigourney
Weaver, Kate
Bosworth,
Alessandro Nivola



Sexy Kojack: less baldness.

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★
THE GIRL IN THE PARK

Woman on the verge of a nervous breakdown...

Playwright David Auburn's directorial debut starts with a simple scenario: jazz singer Julia (Sigourney Weaver) takes her three year old, Maggie, to the park. Her eyes drift away from her daughter as she packs up their belongings, and those precious few minutes are enough time for Maggie to vanish.

All of which sounds like a predictable enough setting, but *The Girl In The Park* doesn't deal with the panic, the police, the

media circus and the milk-carton appeals. Set 16 years after Maggie's disappearance, the film's concern is the lifelong aftermath of those few minutes that cost a mother her daughter. An emotionally shut-down Julia has a dull job in a bank, is divorced from her husband and all but estranged from her son, Chris (Alessandro Nivola), who is about to marry his pregnant girlfriend, Celeste (Keri Russell). Enter mouthy, streetwise Louise (Kate

Bosworth), who disrupts Julia's empty shell of a life. She may or may not be her missing daughter – and she may or may not be taking Julia for a ride.

The fact this tightly focused, character-driven drama comes from the pen of a playwright – Pulitzer Prize-winner Auburn adapted his own play into 2005 film *Proof* and wrote the script for *The Lake House* – is plain to see, given the limited emphasis it places on set-pieces and scenery; even the park is incidental. (As a DVD, though, it's similarly sparse, without a shred of bonus material despite clear potential for a director's commentary.) It's Weaver's subtle, restrained performance that carries the film, only jarring when she fails to empathise with parents alarmed by her approaching their children in the park – given her own experience, her failure to understand their reaction stretches belief.

The Girl In The Park is a tense, unsettling study of a shattered woman clinging to a new, bright thread of hope, and a more subtle and interesting beast than 2008's other child-abduction drama, *Changeling*. Don't expect a satisfying conclusion; the film satisfies because, not in spite of, its resistance to descent into a dramatic denouement.

Anne Wollenberg

FINAL WORD

Weaver and Bosworth both shine in this character-driven drama, but the lack of bonus material makes for a disappointing DVD.



FILM ★★ EXTRAS ★★

THE LODGER

DVD RELEASED: Out now **RRP:** £19.99 **DISCS:** 1 **CERT:** 15 **RUN TIME:** 91 mins **YEAR:** 2008
DIRECTOR: David Ondaatje **STARS:** Alfred Molina, Hope Davis, Simon Baker **EXTRAS:** Making Of; Deleted scenes; Trailers; Subtitles
PICTURE: ★★★★★ **AUDIO:** ★★★★★

Rule #1 for aspirant movie-makers: do not, repeat, do not remake a Hitchcock. For his debut, writer/director David Ondaatje (nephew of novelist Michael) takes the same novel that furnished Hitch with his first hit back in 1926, shifts the action from London to LA and chucks in a tangle of extraneous plot strands. The result's a pretentious muddle, tricked out with irritating gimmicks like speeded-up camerawork. Hope Davis is the housewife who rents her spare room to a creepy stranger (Simon Baker) who may or may not be perpetrating a series of Jack-the-Ripper-copcat killings. Alfred Molina's the stressed-out cop leading the investigation. What they, or Philip Baker Hall, are doing in this dreck is the only mystery worthy of any attention – the paltry extras don't offer a solution.

Philip Kemp



FILM ★★ EXTRAS ★★

BLOOD BROTHERS

DVD RELEASED: Out now **RRP:** £15.99 **DISCS:** 1 **CERT:** 18 **RUN TIME:** 95 mins **YEAR:** 2007
DIRECTOR: Alexi Tan **STARS:** Daniel Wu, Ye Liu, Qi Shu **EXTRAS:** Featurette; Trailer; Subtitles
PICTURE: ★★★ **AUDIO:** ★★★

This exquisitely shot costume drama looks fantastic, but the 'Produced by John Woo' claim on the sleeve only emphasises the fact it isn't actually directed by him. The story contains a few familiar Woo elements, it's true, but without his trademark motifs (not a slo-mo two-gun shootout in sight!) the tone somehow feels a bit tame. Still, gorehounds will get their fix: this blood-drenched tale of three youths who arrive in '30s Shanghai with babes, bucks and bullets on their minds features a goodly crop of maimings, kickings and slayings.

The promised behind-the-scenes featurette wasn't on our review copy, but we predict director Tan won't reveal any core message to the film: there isn't one. You've seen this rags-to-riches-to-ruin tale many times...

Joel McIver

NEXT STOP...

THE FAMILY STONE (2005)
Diane Keaton, Sarah Jessica Parker, Luke Wilson and Claire Danes are among the cast of this warm-hearted drama. The disc includes commentaries and a gag reel.
Film: ★★★ **Extras:** ★★★



FILM ★★ EXTRAS ★

SMOTHER

DVD RELEASED: Out now **RRP:** £15.99 **DISCS:** 1 **CERT:** 12 **RUN TIME:** 89 mins **YEAR:** 2008
DIRECTOR: Vince Di Meglio **STARS:** Diane Keaton, Dax Shepard, Liv Tyler **EXTRAS:** Trailer
PICTURE: ★★★★★ **AUDIO:** ★★★★★

Noah (Dax Shepard) has lost his job, his overbearing mother Marilyn (Diane Keaton) has invaded his house with five pooches in tow and his wife, Clare (Liv Tyler), is desperate for a sprog. Which sounds unpleasant, but experiencing this situation is probably more enjoyable than watching this tedious comedy about it.

Shepard tries hard but comes off like a poor man's Zach Braff, Tyler looks lovely but doesn't have anything to do and, as with Jane Fonda in *Monster-In-Law*, you've got to wonder why Diane Keaton said yes to turning herself into an 89-minute mother-in-law joke. Sure, there's a credit crunch on, but what with *Mama's Boy* and now *Smother*, someone needs to tell her to stop signing up for such tripe. There are no extras apart from the trailer, but it's probably just as well.

Anne Wollenberg